Analysis of Combat Losses

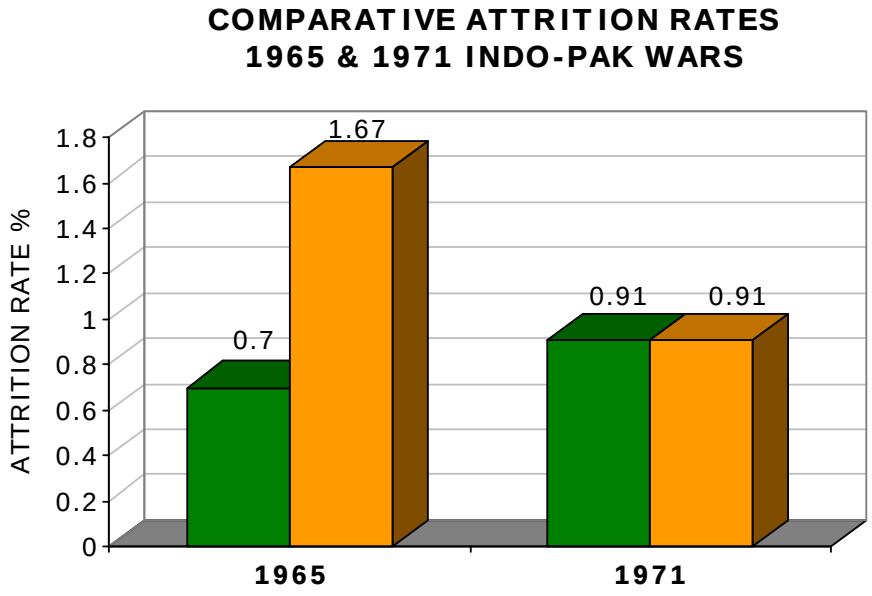
Destruction of maximum enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground is the endeavour of any air force for establishing a desired degree of air control; this provides the means to achieve the ultimate end – lethal force application against surface forces or country-wide infrastructure. For an objective analysis, overall aircraft losses are best considered as an attrition rate or, loss per hundred sorties. Anything beyond 2% is generally considered unacceptable in any conflict. Comparison of attrition rates is a fair measure of the performance of two air forces (not to forget the army's air defence elements) in the quest for air superiority. Following is a summary analysis of PAF and IAF losses in the two major wars.

PAF	1965 WAR (1 SEP – 23 SEP)	IAF
	COMBAT-RELATED AIRCRAFT LOSSES[a]	
8	Air Combat	17
3	Enemy AAA	9
2	Own AAA	-
1	Destroyed on Ground	39
2	Accidents – Combat Related	1
16	OVERALL ATTRITION	66
2,279[b]	TOTAL COMBAT SORTIES FLOWN	3,937[c]
0.7%	ATTRITION RATE	1.67%
	AIRCREW CASUALTIES	
10	KIA	17[d]
3	POW	7
4	Ejected Own Territory	6
1	Survived Crash	-
-	Escaped	1

[a] Does not include Army, Navy or civilian aircraft losses.
[b] Source: Official PAF Records.
[c] Source: *Indian Official History of Indo-Pak War – 1965;* total sorties for Western Theatre only (Eastern Theatre negligible).
[d] Includes two aircrew who succumbed to injuries after landing.

PAF	1971 WAR (21 NOV – 17 DEC)	IAF
COMBAT-RELATED AIRCRAFT LOSSES[e]		
10	Air Combat	18
7	Enemy AAA	36
1	Own AAA	-
7	Destroyed on Ground	3
2	Accidents – Combat Related	3
27	OVERALL ATTRITION	60
2,951[f]	TOTAL COMBAT SORTIES FLOWN	6,542[g]
0.91%	ATTRITION RATE	0.91%
AIRCREW CASUALTIES		
15	KIA	36
4	POW	13
4	Ejected Own Territory	8
-	Escaped	6

[e] Does not include Army, Navy or civilian aircraft losses
[f] Source: Official PAF Records for W Pak; aircrew estimates for E Pak
[g] Source: *Indian Official History of Indo-Pak War – 1971.*



Air Cdre M Kaiser Tufail
2001